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S E C R E T AMMAN 005237

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: IRAQ: JORDANIAN REACTION TO POINTS ON PRESIDENT'S UNGA SPEECH

REF: STATE 175469

Classified By: A/DCM Douglas A. Silliman for reasons 1.5 (B) and (D)

¶1. (C) In the absence of FonMin Muasher (who is leading the Jordanian delegation to the UNGA in New York), A/DCM delivered ref points to Muasher's personal assistant, Ali al-Ayed September 12. A/DCM urged that the GOJ express public support for the President's themes, as well as the GOJ's willingness to engage in further consultations on Iraq.

¶2. (S) Al-Ayed said Jordanians are concerned about the President's remarks and what they will mean for Jordan. He was pleased to see from the President's themes that the U.S. appears to be taking a multilateral and scrupulously legal approach to Iraq's non-compliance with UNSCRs and will take its case to the Security Council. Al-Ayed said that the GOJ had recently reiterated to senior Iraqi visitors (VP Ramadan as well as the Iraqi Trade and Information ministers) the need for Iraq to abide by all UNSCRs and permit the return of UN arms inspectors.

¶3. (S) However, he continued, some of the points in the speech, while true, will have little resonance with the Jordanian public. For example, the statement that Iraq has consistently defied the UN is equally true of Israel, and Jordanians will see a U.S. push for action against Iraq as further evidence of the perceived bias of U.S. policy in the region. Finally, he said, even though the U.S. is pledging to take its case against Iraq to the UNSC, the mention of "unavoidable action" in the final point seems to indicate that the U.S. remains convinced of the need to conduct military action against Iraq.

BERRY